

Assembly Bill No. 2663

CHAPTER 670

An act to amend Section 821 of, and to add Article 5 (commencing with Section 500) to Chapter 3 of Part 1 of Division 1 of, the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to sustainable agriculture.

[Approved by Governor September 24, 2000. Filed
with Secretary of State September 26, 2000.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2663, Thomson. Sustainable agriculture.

Existing law requires the Legislature to provide for a continuing sound and healthy agriculture in California and to encourage a productive and profitable agriculture. Existing law enumerates major principles of the state's agricultural policy.

This bill would state that it is the intent of the Legislature that programs at the University of California relating to sustainable agriculture practices be adequately funded and incorporated into appropriate programs of the state and university to maximize the access of California farmers and ranchers to the information. This bill would also request that the Regents of the University of California fulfill this intent of the Legislature. This bill would also include in the principles of the state's agricultural policy, maximizing the ability of farmers, ranchers, and processors to learn about practices that will enable them to achieve specified state agricultural policies.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(a) A growing number of California farmers and ranchers have adopted, or are seeking to adopt, sustainable farming practices that enable them to reduce pesticide use, manage pesticide and water use cost effectively, increase soil fertility, and reduce off-farm environmental impacts. California is also home to the nation's largest number of organic farmers and ranchers, who produce agricultural products in compliance with the California Organic Foods Act, and acreage dedicated to certified organic production is growing rapidly in California. Additionally, many growers and commodity groups are seeking ways to market their products based on consumer recognition of their stewardship activities.

(b) The State of California and the University of California have created a number of programs designed to promote research on, and facilitate adoption of, sustainable agricultural practices. These programs take a systems approach to agricultural research



management, emphasizing on-farm work with farmers, including small-scale, immigrant, and minority farmers, who voluntarily seek to make a transition to more sustainable agricultural practices. The programs recognize that farmers are implementing successful innovative farming practices, and they support that innovation by applying scientific analysis to the practices and encouraging their broader dissemination to other farmers. The programs emphasize collaborative research and mutual learning among farmers, pest control advisors, extension advisers, commodity groups, and affiliated agricultural organizations to maximize adoption of sustainable agricultural practices by farmers and others in the agriculture industry. Sustainable agricultural programs at the university include research, teaching, and outreach in the areas of sustainable farming systems, biologically integrated farming systems, organic agriculture, small farms, agroecology systems, biointensive integrated pest management, and biological pest control, and include, but are not limited to, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Farming Systems, the Centers for Biological Control, and the Small Farm Center.

(c) California farmers and ranchers are demonstrating a growing desire to obtain the information on sustainable agricultural practices and marketing strategies that these university programs are designed to provide. They are looking to the university to incorporate the programs and the information and practices developed by these programs into the University of California Cooperative Extension and other state and university programs designed to assist California agriculture, so that the technical information and support to adopt these practices are readily available to California farmers and ranchers.

SEC. 2. Article 5 (commencing with Section 500) is added to Chapter 3 of Part 1 of Division 1 of the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

Article 5. Sustainable Agriculture

500. Pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 821, it is the intent of the Legislature that programs at the University of California designed to promote research on, and facilitate adoption of, sustainable agricultural practices, including, but not limited to, research, teaching, and outreach in the areas of sustainable farming systems, biologically integrated farming systems, organic agriculture, small farms, agroecology systems, biointensive integrated pest management, and biological pest control shall be adequately funded through the annual budget process to ensure the programs' ongoing ability to respond to the needs of all sectors of California's agricultural industry. It is the further intent of the Legislature that the sustainable



agricultural practices, methods, and materials identified and developed by these programs be incorporated into appropriate programs of the state and the university to maximize the access of California farmers and ranchers to the information needed to adopt and implement these measures.

501. Pursuant to Section 500 and subdivision (d) of Section 821, the Legislature requests that the Regents of the University of California do both of the following:

(a) Provide adequate and ongoing funding to programs at the University of California designed to promote research on, and facilitate adoption of, sustainable agricultural practices, including, but not limited to, research, teaching, and outreach in the areas of sustainable farming systems, biologically integrated farming systems, organic agriculture, small farms, agroecology systems, biointensive integrated pest management, and biological pest control to ensure the programs' ongoing ability to respond to the needs of all sectors of California's agricultural industry.

(b) Fully incorporate the sustainable agricultural practices, methods, and materials identified and developed by the programs enumerated in this article into all appropriate programs of the university to ensure that California farmers and ranchers have maximum access to the information needed to adopt and implement these measures.

SEC. 3. Section 821 of the Food and Agricultural Code is amended to read:

821. As part of promoting and protecting the agricultural industry of the state and for the protection of public health, safety, and welfare, the Legislature shall provide for a continuing sound and healthy agriculture in California and shall encourage a productive and profitable agriculture. Major principles of the state's agricultural policy shall be all of the following:

(a) To increase the sale of crops and livestock products produced by farmers, ranchers, and processors of food and fiber in this state.

(b) To enhance the potential for domestic and international marketing of California agricultural products through fostering the creation of value additions to commodities and the development of new consumer products.

(c) To sustain the long-term productivity of the state's farms by conserving and protecting the soil, water, and air, which are agriculture's basic resources.

(d) To maximize the ability of farmers, ranchers, and processors to learn about and adopt practices that will best enable them to achieve the policies stated in this section.

